

Wordly Men wiser, in their way, than Christians, in theirs.



SE R M O N

PREACH'D at

Saint JAMES's in Lent, 1698.

St. Luke 16. 8. the latter part of the verse.

For the Children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.

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L O N D O N.

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St. Luke 16. 8. the latter part of the verse.
For the children of this World are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.

AT the beginning of this Chapter, from the first verse to the ninth, we have the Parable of the unjust Steward briefly represented to us, in the following manner. ‘A certain rich Man, finding his Steward guilty of wasting his goods, commands him to bring in his Accounts, that so he might reckon with him, and dismiss him his Service. Whereupon, the Steward presently begins to forecast within himself, what was likely to become of him, and by what means he might be best able to provide, for his future subsistence and well being. Labour, it seems, was not for his purpose, dig he could not: and to get a Lively-hood by beggin, was beneath him, to beg he was ashamed. When therefore, after much thinking, he could fix upon no other way, he at last resolves upon this, to try to make himself Friends of his Lord’s Debtours, that so, when he should be turn’d out of his Service, they might receive him into their houses. And accordingly, he immediately calls them unto him, and makes up his Lord’s Accounts with them: but, in so easy and favourable a manner as, he knew, would very much incline and oblige them, to be kind and helpful to him afterwards. For, instead of exacting the utmost of their Debts, he abates one a fifth part, another a full half, and the like proportion, in all probability, to all the rest. Which when his Lord discover’d: altho’ he could not but be angry with him, for dealing so ungratefully and unjustly by him, yet, at the same time, he could not forbear commanding him, for taking such good care, and making such wise provision, for himself. And the Lord commended the unjust Steward, not for his injustice, but because he had done wisely, ~~providens~~, like one that had his thoughts or wits about him.

From this whole Parable, thus related, our blessed Saviour takes occasion to makes this Inference in my Text, That the *children of this world*, those, who chiefly give themselves up to this World and the things of it, *are wiser in, or for, their generation,* [Eis Tūw Xue&v.] act more prudently in their way, or in relation to their worldly Concerns, *than the children of light*, than those who, by the light of the Gospel, have been taught much better things, have been instructed in a sense of Religion, and an eternal future State of Happiness or Misery, and profess that they believe the truth of, obligations to, and necessity of providing for, them, do, in relation to their affairs, and the great and momentous business of their Profession.

Accordingly, I shall consider these words at present, only as they depend upon the Parable, and, in so doing,

First, I shall enquire what extraordinary instances of prudence our Saviour might probably observe, in the *unjust Steward's* conduct of himself, which are rarely to be found, among the *children of light*, in the management of their Affairs, and are therefore a sufficient ground for, and justification of, this his observation.

Secondly, I shall examine from what Causes it can possibly come to pass, that the *children of this world* should act more prudently, in relation to the things of this World, than the *children of light* do, in relation to those of the other.

Thirdly, I shall shew that, altho' the *children of this world* *are wiser, in their generation, than the children of light*, yet they are far from being absolutely and truly wise.

Lastly, I shall conclude all, with a few words of exhortation, both to the *children of this world*, and the *children of light*.

First, I am to enquire what extraordinary instances of prudence our Saviour might probably observe, in the *unjust Steward's* conduct of himself, which are rarely to be found, among the *children of light*, in the management of their Affairs, and are therefore a sufficient ground for, and justification of, this his observation. And here I think, without the least straining of the Parable, we may fairly insist upon these two general Instances, under which we shall find a great many particular ones comprehended :

Firſt, His provident concern, thoughtfulness and care, for the future.

Secondly, His making a true and wise use of Money.

Firſt, His provident concern, thoughtfulness and care, for the future. No sooner did he find himself disappointed of those hopes, which probably he had entertain'd, of spending his whole Life, all the futurity which he had any notion of, in his Lord's service and favour : but he immediately began to look forward, and to lay new projects and designs, for his comfortable ſubſtance in the remaining part of his days, which now, contrary to his expectations, were to be afreſh provided for. *My Lord, faith he, taketh away from me the stewardſhip :* as if he had ſaid ; the hopes, which I once had, of taking up my reſt in my Lord's house, and spending the remainder of my days there, with ease and comfort, are now quite vaniſh'd ; I am commanded to be gone & thrust naked out of those doors, where I once thought I had laid up goods for many years, and all those fair promises, which I had made my ſelf, of future Happiness, are come to nothing. *What then ſhall I do ?* I know not how long I may live : but I would willingly live comfortably all my days. Were my life now to have an end, my cares might have one too : but, ſince that may laſt, I would fain have my Happiness laſt with it ; for who can bear the thoughts of living, when Life it ſelf ſhall be a burthen and a torment ? Yet this at preſent is my caſe : I may have a long ſlock of Life behind, but can foreſee nothiſg, but shame and misery, to attend it. My days it may be will be manny, alas ! too many, ſince they are all ſo likely to be evil. This cuts me to my heart : this wounds my Soul, and makes me dread the very thoughts of living. Something then I muſt do, ſome foundation of future Happiness I muſt lay : that ſo, having a reasonable proſpect of Happiness, as long as I have any proſpect of being, I may live now without fear, and, from the ſeeds of Ease and Comfort ſown at preſent, reap a plentiful and cheerful Crop hereafter. Nay, and ſince I ſeem to have diſferent degrees of Happiness in my power, why ſhould I not aim at the highest ? Why ſhould I be contented to think only of getting a bare Livelyhood by labour

labour or begging, when I have an opportunity in my hands of providing amply and comfortably for my self, by securing an interest, in all my Lord's Debtors ?

Such were his thoughts, and such his resolutions : not only happiness, but the very greatest happiness, which he could think himself capable of obtaining, he made his supreme end. And, because he knew that resolving to be happy would not, of it self, be sufficient to make him so, he therefore stops not here : but immediately proceeds to that, which would, viz. the searching out, and putting in execution, such means, as were most fit and proper for the attainment of his end. And here he acts with judgment, and with courage. His judgment distinguisheth for him, betwixt such means as were likely to attain his end, and such as were not, and makes him reject the one, and embrace the other. It was not at all likely, that he, who had so long liv'd an easy life, and in the most creditable place among his Lord's Servants, should make any great matter either of labouring or begging : and therefore he presently gives over all thoughts of these. But nothing could be more likely, than that he, who perfectly well knew his Lord's Debtors, and probably enough had often try'd before, how far they might be tamper'd with, in the way which he now thought on, should bring his ends about by them ; and therefore here he fixeth his thoughts and resolutions. His courage keeps up his Spirits, under the difficulties and disappointments, which he at first met with, in his search after proper means, for the attainments of his end. And what, tho' labour and begging, which came first into his mind, would not answer his purpose ? yet still he plucks up a good heart, and believes there is something else that will. And, upon this belief, he goes on undauntedly and unweariedly, to find out what this something else should be. A third time therefore he sets himself to thinking, resolving never to be baffled and give over, nay hardly so much as allowing himself any respite, till he had found out that, which he search'd for ; till he had secur'd to himself a comfortable prospect of being made easy and happy, after he should be dismiss'd his Lord's Service.

And now, having in his thoughts mark'd out the way,

his desired end, he stays not long, before he put his Theory into practice: but instantly makes towards the happiness which he has now in view: and, by a vigorous and seasonable prosecution of those means, which he had found would lead him to it, soon brings himself within the blessed influences of it: soon changes his black fears of misery into bright hopes of happiness, and his dread of life into a love and desire of it.

And what, I beseech you, could possibly have been more agreeable to all the rules of true wisdom, in his way, that is upon his Notions and Suppositions, than such a behaviour as this, was? For, since all Men naturally desire future, as well as present, happiness, and are apt to be uneasy and unsatisfy'd in their minds, till they have obtain'd, at least, a rational hope of such and happiness, as shall run commensurate with their beings; and, since the attainment of such an hope is the most just and noble, and ought to be the principal, aim of all our Thoughts and Resolutions, and is very much within the power of them; who can sufficiently commend our unjust Steward, for directing all his thoughts and enquiries, this way? For making and happiness as extensive as his being, as he thought, the supreme object of all his Projects and Contrivances: the center, which they all tended to, and met in.

'Tis true indeed, he unhappily mistook, as to his notion of the extent of his being: but he acted as wisely, as a Man could do, upon this mistaken notion, and therefore, tho' not absolutely wise, yet was *wise in his generation*, which is all that we, at present, contend for. Supposing, as he did, that the whole happiness of our being consists of, and terminates in, the good things of this World, he could not possibly take up a wiser Resolution, than he did, that he would find out some way or other, of becoming master of a competent share of them.

And, since the greater the happiness, so much the better and more desireable: was it not a truly laudable greatness of mind in him, that would not let him sit down contented with a moderate degree of happiness, when he had reason to think, that there was a greater and more noble degree of it, within his reach: but put him upon aspiring earnestly after the greatest

est? And, when he had thus made the greatest happiness, which he could hope for, his supreme end: must not every body applaud him, for his immediate Application of himself, to find out the proper and ready way to it? Must not every body speak well of his undaunted Resolution, and unwearied Diligence, in his search after this way? For what can become a Man more, than to loose no time, when he is in persuit of happiness? When will we count it wisdom to exert all our judgment, industry and courage, if not then, when we are about securing to our selves a plain and certain Path to Happiness, for ever?

And then, what greater instance of his wisdom could we have, than his hastning, with all possible speed, to put those means, which he found most likely to obtain his desir'd end, in Execution? Had we wholly obmited this: the other two instances of his wisdom would have come to nothing. For what signifieth our resolving to be happy, and our finding out the means of becoming so: unless we so apply those means, as actually to become so? And had he omitted this, only for a time: he might perhaps, in that time, have lost his opportunity, and ever after call'd himself fool, for not using it, while he had it, in his hands. But his resolving to be happy, even as happy, as he could be, according to his notions: his immediate and industrious application of himself, to find out the true means of becoming so, and his present and effectual Application of those means, so as to become so, are abundant proofs and evidences of his wisdom.

But alas! how little of this wisdom is there to be found among the *Children of Light*, in the management of their Affairs? How few of them are there, that ever concern themselves, as they ought to do, about the future: when nevertheless, they pretend to believe, that they have a long futurity behind, even as long as eternity it self? How few, who ever seriously ask themselves that Question, *What shall I do, when my Lord taketh away from me the Stewardship?* when yet they know infallibly, that it cannot be very long before it must, of course, be taken from them? How little do they live, as if they were to live for ever? How little care do they

take, to lay in such a stock of happiness, as will hold out with their beings, to all eternity : when yet they profess they believe, that it must be done now, or never, and that they cannot live, with any tolerable ease, comfort and satisfaction, till they see it done. Vain and foolish Creatures ! to complain of their own folly, and not to mend it : to see eternal happiness, within their reach, and yet scarce to put on so much as one serious and steady resolution, of using their utmost endeavours to obtain and possess it.

Or, if they do happen to aim and resolve well in the main, yet what little care do they take about setting their aims so high as they ought to do ; or even putting their resolutions, such as they are, into practice ? Eternal happiness they can't but own to be the best and noblest end of Man. But then they seem perfectly indifferent, what degree of his happiness shall be theirs : let them but get into Heaven at all, and it is much at one to them, whither the Glory of the Stars, the Glory of the Moon, or the Glory of the Sun, is to be their Glory. Nay, and if they do at last act so wisely, as to pronounce the very highest degree of Happiness and Glory, which they are capable of, to be their supreme end ; yet how dilatory frequently are they, in searching out, how awkward in judging of, how soon discourag'd and beaten off from their quest after, the true means of obtaining it ? Any time, God knows, rather than the present, is generally allotted for this : and any means, rather than those, which are most plainly fit and proper, generally pitch'd upon. The future time, which is wholly out of our power, is but too commonly destin'd for this important work : and every other way to this end shall be rather try'd, than *Holyness in all manner of Conversation*, which is both in its own nature so proper to lead us to it, and without which, God himself has assur'd us, it will be impossible for us ever to arrive at it. And then, how apt are most Christians to give over their search, even after this way to the greatest of happinesses, if they chance to meet with ever so little difficulty or opposition in it ? If they do not immediately find out a very ready and and easy passage into Heaven : it is great odds but they grow either indifferent or impatient, either think it hardly worth

worth their while to take any farther care about it, or despair that their care will be to any purpose? If they cannot promise themselves, that they shall be able, by one or two assaults, to take the Kingdom of Heaven: they often want courage to believe that a third however might prove effectual: and rather pitifully submit, to forego even their hopes of Heaven it self, than to resolve upon these severe and violent methods of attaining it. Foolish dilatoriness indeed! to put off the study of the way to Heaven, so much as one moment. Base and sottish cowardise! to let our Spirits fail us, even in sight of it,

But more foolish yet is that dilatoriness, which is but too common among the *Children of Light*, and makes them omit the use of those very means, which they acknowledge to be proper, and therefore resolve to pursue, so long, till they have, either in part, or perhaps wholly, lost the opportunity of using them. More sottish still is that Cowardise, which suffers them to grow werry, faint and desist, when they have their means, as well as their end, plain before them. To what purpose do they look into the book of life, to learn from thence *what they must do to inherit eternal Life*, and there find it plainly written, *if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*: Mat. 19. 17. and yet, after all, either not apply themselves to the keeping of them: till it is become exceeding difficult, if not impossible, to keep them: or, at least, apply themselves so faintly, as not to be able to keep them unto the end? Oh! how much wiser would it be, with the unjust Steward, not only to resolve to be happy, but immediately and unweariedly to search out the right way of becoming so, and immediately and unweariedly to prosecute that way, so as to become so? For we can never be put too soon into possession of a well grounded hope of eternal happiness, never do enough for it. But I have been too long upon this first head, and therefore must only just mention,

Secondly, The other instance o' the unjust Steward's wisdom, which was, *his making a true and wise use of Money*. And that, in short, was, by disposing of it so, that it might ever after (ever, I mean, according to his notion of it) be of ad-

vantage to him. For this it is plain he had an entire regard to, in remitting to his Lord's Debtors so great a part, of their respective debts, as we are told in the Parable he did. *I am resolv'd what to do,* said he, *that when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.* As it he had said, I have now in my power a sum of Money, which I will so dispose of, as to make it a security, for my future subsistence and well-being, as long as I shall live. And accordingly he immediately layeth it out so, as he knew would best serve this end.

And how can a Man possibly better put his Money out to use, than by buying everlasting friends with it? This is to make riches indeed a substantial good; so to fix them, as that, with all their wings, they shall not be able to fly away; and to make the very utmost advantage, and that certainly is the wifest use, that can possibly be made, of them. And therefore this instance of wisdom our Lord explicitly insists upon, and most pathetically recommends to his Disciples v. 9. *And I say unto you, Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

And yet alas! how few of the *Children of Light* are there, that act with due regard to this Rule? How few, that are like to fare the better, for their wise disposal of their money: *when their stewardship shall be taken from them?* How few, that distribute so, as to lay up for themselves a good foundation, *against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life.*

In vain then do the *Children of Light* pretend to manage their Affairs, with as much wisdom, as the *Children of this World* do theirs. Too plainly do the foregoing instances evince the contrary, and abundance more might be still said to make it plainer: did I not confine my self to the Parable, and were it not high time to hasten,

Secondly, To examine from what causes it can possibly come to pass, that the *Children of this world* should act with more prudence, in relation to the things of this World, *than the Children of light* do, in relation to those of the other. And here be pleas'd to consider

First, The advantages which, in some respects, the things of this World have of those of the other : I do not mean absolute advantages, such as, all circumstances consider'd, will be judg'd by a wise Man so to be ; - for alas ! there are none such ; but such, as Men, who consider things but partially, are apt to esteem advantages, and to be led away by, as such. Of this nature are the actual presence and visibility of the things of this World, while those of the other are absent and invisible. Which, tho' if impartially consider'd, ought not to make us give preference to the things of this World (because of the infinitely larger extent, and eternally longer duration, of those of the other, which do abundantly make amends for, and indeed vastly overbalance, the disadvantages of their absence and invisibility) yet, we find by experience, too often do. Our senses are generally too hard for our reason and our faith : and such fools are we, that, for a small sum paid down in present, we care not what we part with in reversion. We pretend most of us to believe the certainty of a future State, but I fear many of us, with great wavering and doubtfulness. But the things, which we see and feel, we are sure off: and the impressions of these are strong and lively upon our minds, while those of the other are faint and languid. Besides even those, who do heartily believe a future State, yet for this very reason, because it is future and invisible, are apt to forget it, and put off the thoughts of it, from time to time : whereas present and sensible things are sure to be remembred, and, calling constantly upon us for present care, are too apt to engross all, and cheat the future. So that, where Men do not carefully attend to, and often even force themselves upon a serious contemplation of, the future and invisible things of another life (and how small is the number of those Men, that do this ?) it cannot possibly be otherwise but that these future and invisible things will have too little of their care, and the present and sensible ones, of this World, too much. But

Secondly, As there is something in the nature of the things of this World, which seems to many Men to give them a preference to those of the other : so there is something within our selves, which inclines us to those rather than these. Ever

since

Since the fall, our affections are become earthly : and we inherit a curse, not unlike that of the Serpent's, of creeping on the ground, and eating the dust. We easily, too easily, take delight in being busy'd about the affairs of this Life : but, if our minds offer to give the word of command, and call us forth to the business of the other : then we presently find a law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin, which is in our members. Rom. 7. 23. If we steer one way, we are sure of having the full wind and tide of our natural affections along with us ; if the other, we are as sure to want both. And therefore the greatest part of Mankind, loving their ease, and being afraid of difficulties, rather than they will be at the toyl of stemming the tide, suffer themselves to be driven by it. Rather than they will be at the pains of climbing up a steep and craggy Rock, tho' it be to Heaven, they will lazily roll easily down hill, tho' it be to Hell. To speak without a figure, what Men love most, they undoubtedly prosecute best : and for this reason often is it, that their conduct, in respect of Heaven, is so awkward and foolish, in respect of the World, so artful and prudent.

Thirdly, Another reason of this is, because the Children of this world aim but at one main end, viz. the good things of this World : while the Children of light aim at two, and two such, as are as different and contrary in their natures one to the other, as light and darkness, viz. the World and Heaven too. When a Man has but one thing to do, and unites all his Faculties and Powers for the doing of it, his work cannot fail of going on, easily and successfully : but when he is divided, in his opinions, interests and affections, between two objects, and gives half of himself one way, and half another, it can hardly possibly be otherwise, but that he will make but very lame work on't.

Especially if, as in the case before us, he aims at ends directly different and contrary the one to the other ; like a Man that is to look before and behind him, almost at the same instant, he will look neither way, to any good purpose. Thus will it be, at the best, if we are indifferent as to our Ends,

and

and equally inclin'd and dispos'd to both. But, if we once come to lean a little more to one than the other, that will by degrees gain us quite over to it's side, and nothing, but the name of aiming at two ends, will remain. We may at first propose to our selves to serve God and Mammon too, but this, our blessed Saviour himself tell us, we shall find impossible in practise : we shall soon hate the one and love the other, soon hold to the one and despise the other. Matt. 6. 24. And which of the two, God or Mammon, the World or Heaven, we find in experience, oftenest prevails, I am ashame'd to say.

But now the *Children of this world*, not being distracted with different and rival ends, but having only one main end in view, find it an easy matter to keep close to that, and to lay and execute wise Designs, for the attainment of it.

Lastly, The fashion of this wicked World, in which we live, is another great cause of this. The general example and custom, approbation and applause, of the World, are apt to have abundantly too great an influence upon us : to draw us into a conformity with them in things, in which we should by no means conform : and to keep us from dissenting from them in things, in which we ought in all reason and duty, to dissent. So that, while Men attend to these, so much as they generally do, it is no wonder at all, that their conduct, in regard to the things of this World, should be so much more prudent and commendable, than in regard to the things of the other. For who knows nor, that the Wisdom in fashion is altogether that of this World ? This is array'd in gorgeous apparel, and Men bow down to it, and worship it, and call whatsoever it dictates the voice of God. When, on the contrary, the wisdom, which, really is from above, is mock'd and derided, and like its blessed Master, revil'd and spit upon. While therefore Men strive to be fashionable, they must necessarily be wise for Earth, and not for Heaven ; while they value the praise of Men, more than the praise of God, as they too commonly do, they will not be half so good Servants of God, if at all his Servants, as they will be Servants of the World.

These, if not all, yet, are some of the principal causes of the

the imprudent Management of the *Children of light*, in relation to their Affairs, if compar'd with that of the *Children of this world*, in relation to theirs: But, least the *Children of this world* should grow conceited, upon this comparison; and, because our Saviour has pronoune'd them *wise in their generation*, fancy themselves wise indeed; I proceed.

Thirdly, To shew, that, altho' they are *wiser in their generation than the children of light*; yet still they are very far from being, absolutely and truly, wise. And this will evidently appear from considering, that they are egregiously deficient in the very first and main point of wisdom, which is, the choice of their end, the settling of the mark, which they are to shoot at; for, as he can never be said to be a truly wise Man, who doth not choose a good end: so neither can be, who doth not prefer a better to a worse; and, for his ultimate and supreme end, fix upon the very greatest good, which he knows himself to be capable of. And consequently, he who doth not choose *Heaven before the World*, the certain, solid, ever-satisfying and everlasting Pleasures of that, before the uncertain, empty, unsatisfying and short-liv'd Pleasures of this: but takes up with the *World*, as his supreme and ultimate end: as made but a foolish choice, and can never, by any after-conduct, deserve the name of a wise Man. Nay, the wiser he proves afterwards in his generation, the more care and paine he takes, to prosecute this ill chosen end, the more foolish still he really grows: because, by this means, he engageth himself still deeper and deeper in that, which he ought, if possible, to extricate himself from: he perfaeth folly closer and closer, and consequently flyes from true wisdom farther and farther.

So that, at the best, the *Children of this world* are but *wise fools*, and that, methinks, is but a very sorry character. They very artificially indeed pursue shadows instead of substances: very industriously lay out themselves upon things, which, as the Scripture elegantly expresseth it, are not; are all *fruth and vanity*: and very ingeniously neglect those things, *Prov. 23. 5.* which, not only truly are, are solid and substantiall' *Gods*, but shall alone continue to be to all eternity. But God forbid, either that any of us should become wise, or any of them longer remain so, at this rate. Rather let us, who call our selves *Children of the light*, *walk as children of the light*, *Ephes. 5. 8.* with *Life and Immortality always in our view*: *2 Tim. 1. 10.* and let them on the contrary, who have fancy'd themselves wise, because they have been acknowledg'd to be *wise in their generation*, *Col. 4. 10.* become fools, that so they may be truly wise; fools for Earth, that they may be wise for Heaven; fools for time, that they may be wise for eternity. For the more effectual exhorting of both to which, I shall now

Lastly, Conclude all, with a few words of exhortation, both to the *Children of this world*, and the *Children of light*. And

First, For the *Children of this world*: is it not a thousand pities, that all their exact skill, care and industry, should be thrown away and lost, upon the trifling and perishing things of this *World*, when, if rightly applyed,

plied, they might obtain for them, and inestimable, and never fading, substance in Heaven ? Oh how would they themselfes laugh at those poor silly Wretches, whom they should see taking as much pains to get Lead or Brass, as, if wisely directed, would, with the same ease, bring in Gold ? And how much more do they deserve (I will not say to be laugh'd at, for the neglect of Heaven is no laughing matter, but) to be pity'd and be-moaned, who foolishly lavish away that care and pains, upon emptiness, and vanity, which would serve for the attainment of such Joys, *as eye never saw, ear never heard, and such as are too big for the heart of man to conceive?* Nay, I will go yet farther, who with half the care and pains, that they take for earth, might obtain heaven. For, tho' the busines of Religion is at first some what difficult, yet, when once we have conquer'd the beginning, the way after is all smooth : it is all a way of continu'd pleasantness. Whereas the busines of this World is ever loading us with new burdens, and the more what we call the good things of it encrease upon us, the more do our cravings and appetites, our cares, fears and griefs, generally increase too.

For shame then look up, thou worldling, and ly no longer groveling on this sordid Earth. Think, seriously with thy self, what a deceitful, treacherous, base, empty cloud of Happiness, thou now grasp'st at, and instantly turn thy back upon it, and scornfully bid adieu to it. Again think with thy self, what an exceeding and eternal weight of glory thy good God has made the high prize of thy calling, and immediately gird up thy loins, and endeavour so to run, that thou mayst obtain. And this thou need'st not fear doing with ease, if thou art but willing : since thou hast been long exercis'd and train'd up to care and thoughtfulness, and much more hard labour, than thou wilt need here.

But, mistake me not, I do not mean, that tho' shouldest take no care at all about the things of this World ; for undoubtedly, God, who has plac'd us in it, and made us to stand so much in need of the things of it, has given us leave, in a proper way and time, to provide, use, and rejoice in them. All that I desire is, that you would not make this World your ultimate End, but turn your Thoughts from it, as such, and fix them upon that, which alone can deserve to be so, the *happiness of the Saints in Heaven.*

And, blessed God ! what a glorious exchange will this be for you ? What inexpressible Comforts will you feel in your mind, when you shall see Heaven at the end of all your Labours ? When your hopes of perishing Riches, shall be turn'd into hopes of a Treasure that can never corrupt or fade away : and your hopes of the trifling Honours of this World, into hopes of evershining Crowns and Scepters, ever glorious Principalities and Kingdoms. In one word, when, for false pleasures you shall have true ones, for light one weighty, for one drop of those whole Rivers of these.

Secondly, As to the *Children of light* ; what a grievous reproach and Disparagement is it to them, that, when they have so truly noble and excellent an end, as they have, in view; they should either wholly neglect

the prosecution of it, or at least, prosecute it with great coldness and indifference? They cannot but know, that one of the first Rules of Wisdom is, to proportion our concern and care for things, to the merits of the things themselves, and their usefulness to us. Again, they cannot but know that Heaven, as it is in it self more valueable, so it is to us more advantagious and desirable, than all the things of this World put together. And why then, in God's name, do they trifle here, where they ought to be so much in earnest? why are they so frugal of their care and pains for those things, which of all others infinitely best, I had almost said which alone, deserve them?

Oh! let us not be wise in part any longer: but, as we have begun and aim'd wisely, so let us go on, like wise Men, to use our utmost endeavours for the attainment of that end, which we have so wisely aim'd at. And, that present and sensible things may not divert us from these wise endeavours, let us be sure to think often on the certainty and eternity of a future State: how infallible foundations it stands upon, even our own nature, reason, and the word of God who cannot lye, and by these considerations, let us make it always present with us; how much more, by reason of the eternal duration and the inconceivably vast extent of its Happiness or Misery, it stands us in stead to provide for that, than for the trifling things of this perishing Life, and let us proportion out Cares accordingly.

Again, Let us consider seriously with our selves, what a mean and scandalous thing it is to be said of us, that our deprav'd and irregular affections should get the better of our reason and our faith: and let us forthwith set our selves with all our might, to cultivate, improve and strengthen these, that so they may, as they ought to do; correct, subdue, and entirely keep under, those.

Once more, let us be no longer wavering and doubtful in our Minds, dividing our selves betwixt Earth and Heaven: but let Heaven, which deserves, have us all: that is, principally and before every other thing. Here is our true Treasure: here therefore let our hearts be. Then will the busines of Religion go on cheerfully, the salvation of our Souls securely.

Lastly, Let us often call to mind, what a vile and wretchedly wicked World we live in, and how ill therefore it will becothe us to be conformed to it, and besides how solemnly we have all promis'd the contrary. Let us dare to be singular, in order to be happy. Let us dare to keep on, in our way towards Heaven, tho' we cannot meet with so much as one, to bear us company in it. Nay, tho' Men should revile us, and persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us, upon this account, yet still let us take heart and merrily go on, always rememb'reng who it is that has said to such, *Great is your reward in Heaven.* Mat. 5. 11. And, yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and his reward is with him. Heb. 10. 27. Revel. 22.

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